



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

# News Release

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## **OPERATION PREDATOR ARRESTS SURPASS 5,000**

*El Paso area accounts for more than 80 arrests in initiative targeting child sex predators*

EL PASO, Texas – More than 80 of the 5,000 child sex offenders arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) as part of an ongoing international initiative known as Operation Predator have occurred in the El Paso area, giving Texas the largest number of arrests nationwide.

Michael J. Garcia, Homeland Security Assistant Secretary for ICE, announced today that arrests in the 20-month long effort have surpassed 5,000. Among those individuals arrested here are:

- Secundino Venegas Leyva, 75, was arrested Jan. 20 and charged with indecency with a child. Venegas Leyva molested an 8-year-old relative. He was deported Feb. 2.
- Victor Villa Delgado, 39, was arrested Nov. 23. He was convicted of indecency with a child. Villa Delgado molested a 9-year-old girl, and is in removal proceedings pending an immigration hearing.
- Dr. Morgan C.D. Dyer, 60, was arrested Nov. 18 in Midland, Texas, and was convicted of possessing visual depictions of minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct. He is awaiting sentencing.
- Jose Luevano Gallegos, 50, was arrested Sept. 17 and was convicted of indecency with a child after molesting a 13-year-old relative. He was deported Oct. 5.
- Carlos Solis-Molina, 19, was arrested July 2, and charged with aggravated sexual assault of a child. He sexually assaulted a 13-year-old acquaintance. He was deported July 7.

Operation Predator is a comprehensive initiative aimed at those who prey on and exploit children, including human traffickers, international sex tourists, Internet pornographers, and foreign national predators whose crimes make them deportable.

“ICE will not allow these sexual predators to go unpunished,” said Ronald J. Wood, ICE El Paso deputy special agent-in-charge. “ICE will identify and arrest heinous criminals, such as those who have molested children or trade images of child sexual abuse, and where possible, remove foreign nationals who have lost the privilege to remain in the U.S. because of a crime against a child.”

Operation Predator evolved out of ICE's mission to find and deport illegal aliens -- particularly those with criminal records, and reflects the agency's traditional public safety mission. Those arrested fall into four general categories:

**Foreign National Child Predators:** More than 85 percent of the Operation Predator arrests involve foreign national sex offenders whose crimes make them removable from the United States. To date, more than 2,100 of these predators have been deported. Locally, the majority of the arrests fall under this category. Child predators arrested in the area are mostly Mexican nationals, who have either already been deported or are in removal proceedings. More than 80 percent of those arrested in the El Paso area were permanent residents, or "green card" holders, who lost their immigration status after being convicted of a felony.

**International Child Sex Tourists:** Working cooperatively with foreign governments through ICE's attaché offices worldwide, ICE agents have made 14 arrests, including the first 12 arrests, under the child sex tourism provisions of the PROTECT Act.

**Human Smuggling & Trafficking of Children:** The criminal networks engaged in human smuggling and trafficking have become more violent and more profit-driven than ever before. At the same time, some of their victims are getting younger and younger.

**Internet Child Pornography:** Drawing on ICE's cyber crime investigative expertise, ICE is tackling the crimes that cross the nation's virtual borders. One massive investigation has resulted in more than 1,200 arrests worldwide and marks the first time the government has gone after the financial side of child pornography. Also, through the National Child Victim Identification System, more than 1,600 pornographic images containing child pornography have been authenticated.

Additional information about Operation Predator is available on the Web at [www.ice.gov](http://www.ice.gov). ICE encourages the reporting of suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. Investigators staff this hotline around the clock.

Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*